

REMARKS

Claims 16-19, and 23-29 are pending in the application. Claims 25-29 are newly added. Support for these claims can be found, e.g., at page 6, lines 12-27. Applicants thank the Examiner for his allowance of claims 18 and 19 and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 16-19 and 23-29.

Claim Rejections

Claims 16, 17, 23, and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,227,717 to Ott et al (hereinafter "Ott"). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is overcome with respect to claims 16, 17, 23, and 24.

Claim 16 recites, in part, a fiber optic connector assembly including a fiber optic connector, a plug, and an adhesive tape. The fiber optic connector includes a ferrule. The plug is configured to fit about and engage the ferrule of the fiber optic connector to seal the end face from air-borne particles. The tape is releasably attached to the connector and to the plug.

In contrast, Ott discloses a dust cap that can be secured to an adapter using a resilient retaining strap. The retaining strap is characterized as stretchable and not as adhesive. See column 4, lines 8-10 of Ott. Furthermore, the retaining strap is not removed from the dust cap. See Figures 5 and 6 of Ott. The retaining strap is not even attached to the connector. Rather, the retaining strap fits over an adapter body. See column 4, lines 2-4.

No motivation is provided in Ott to secure a plug to a connector using adhesive tape. The rejection notes that tape is a common household item useful for releasably sticking things together. However, no motivation is provided in Ott to releasably stick a plug onto a connector. Rather, the dust cap disclosed in Ott is placed on a connector without any further means of securement. Additional securement is only added when securing the plug to an adapter. Even under the Examiner's reasoning, therefore, Ott cannot be used to provide motivation to hold a plug to a connector using adhesive tape.

Even if the retaining strap of Ott is considered equivalent to the tape recited in claim 16, a point Applicants do not concede, no motivation is provided to connect the retaining strap to a connector. In fact, Ott characterizes the embodiment with the retaining strap as separate from the embodiment configured for use with a connector. See column 3, line 56 through column 4,

line 4. For at least these reasons, Ott would not lead a person having skill in the art to the invention of claim 16. Claim 17 depends from claim 16 and is allowable for at least the same reasons. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 16 and 17.

Claim 23 recites, in part, a fiber optic connector assembly including a fiber optic connector, a plug, and a cover. The fiber optic connector includes a ferrule. The plug is configured to be mounted over the ferrule within a clean room environment. The plug is also configured to seal the end face of the ferrule from contaminants. The cover holds the plug to the connector and is releasably attached to the plug and to the connector with adhesive.

Applicants respectfully submit that Ott would not lead a person having skill in the art to the invention of claim 23 for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 16. In addition, Ott provides no motivation to releasably attach the cover to the plug. Rather, the plug either is placed on a connector without additional securement or is secured to an adapter using a retaining strap. Ott does not disclose or suggest that the retaining strap is releasably secured to the plug. For at least these reasons, Ott would not lead a person having skill in the art to the invention of claim 23. New claims 27-29 depend from claim 23 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 23 and 27-29.

Claim 24 recites, in part, a sealing assembly including a plug and adhesive tape. The plug is configured to fit about and engage an end face of a ferrule coupled to a fiber optic connector. The plug is configured to seal the end face of the ferrule from contaminants. The adhesive tape holds the plug to the fiber optic connector. A center portion of the adhesive tape is releasably attached to the plug. First and second end portions of the adhesive tape are releasably attached to the fiber optic connector.

Applicants respectfully submit that Ott would not lead a person having skill in the art to the invention of claim 24 for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 16. In addition, Ott does not disclose releasably attaching a center portion of adhesive tape to a plug and end portions of the tape to a connector. Rather, Ott discloses securing one end of a retaining strap to a dust cap and securing the opposite end of the retaining strap to an adapter. For at least these reasons, Ott does not disclose or suggest the invention of claim 24. Claims 25-26 depend from claim 24 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 24-26.

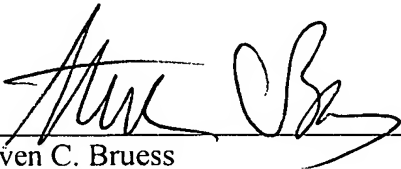
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.



Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

Date: February 21, 2006



Steven C. Bruess
Reg. No. 34,130

SCB/JKS:ck